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January 14, 1954

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SOVIET INFLUENCE IN MANCHURIA

Recent History of Soviet "Legal" Position in Manchuria

Ten years after its sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway to the Japanese in 1935, the Soviet government was again exerting its influence in Manchuria. On August 9, 1945, Red Army troops invaded Manchuria in pursuance of a Soviet declaration of war against Japan. Five days later, the Chinese National Government signed agreements in Moscow which granted to the USSR certain privileges in Manchuria for a term of thirty years: the right to station military, naval, and air force units in the Port Arthur naval base area; a leasehold on several piers and warehouses in Dairen, the right to name the harbormaster there, and exemption from Chinese customs duties at that port; joint ownership and operation of the Chinese-Changchun Railway (the former Chinese Eastern and South Manchurian railways) and its "subsidiary enterprises," and the right to use this railway net for the transport of Soviet troops and munitions. Before the main body of Red Army troops had finally departed from Manchuria on May 16, 1946, the Soviet government had utilized these troops and its new treaty rights in such a manner as to seriously obstruct the attempts of the Chinese National Government to restore its authority in the area.

The Soviet rights in Manchuria acquired in 1945 were not formally acknowledged by the Chinese Communists until February 14, 1950, when the newly established Communist central regime concluded a new Sino-Soviet agreement permitting the USSR to continue its enjoyment of these "rights" in substantially the same manner as before, but only until the end of 1952 at the latest. Since this agreement, the scope of these Soviet rights has been restricted, and benefits usurped by the USSR in Manchuria have been given up. In August 1950, the USSR transferred to the "Chinese People's Republic" 302 former Japanese properties in Manchuria, most of which were "war booty" but part of which had been leased from the Chinese in Dairen under the August 14, 1945 agreement. On December 31, 1952, the USSR relinquished its joint interest in the ownership and operation of the Chinese-Changchun Railway. And in the fall of 1953, the principal outlet for Soviet consumer goods in Manchuria, the Soviet-owned Tschurin Company, was reportedly turned over to the Chinese Communists.

Meanwhile, Peiping

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Meanwhile, Peiping reviewed the "rights" which it would allow the USSR to exercise in Manchuria, and has removed some and granted additional others. On September 15, 1952, Moscow accepted the Chinese Communist invitation to keep Soviet troops at Port Arthur beyond the end of 1952 stipulated by the 1950 agreement as the latest date by which the Soviets had to evacuate the area. The new agreement provides that Soviet troops shall remain in the Port Arthur area until peace treaties with Japan had been concluded by both countries. Other provisions of the February 14, 1950 agreement on Soviet "rights" in the naval base area are presumably still operative. Earlier, on March 27, 1950, the Soviet Union was permitted to participate in the ownership and operation of a civil aviation company, one of whose routes now goes between Peiping and Siberia across Manchuria. On November 13, 1953, the Peiping government announced that it had also granted the Soviet-Korean Civil Aviation Company transit, and probably landing, "rights" in Manchuria. The status of Soviet technical advisors working on various projects throughout China was probably initially established by an agreement signed in April 1950; a more recent agreement on this subject, however, was included in the September 1953 agreement covering Soviet economic assistance in behalf of China's first five-year plan. Nothing definite is known about the present status of the former Soviet "rights" in Dairen, nor is it known whether the Soviets still have the "right" to use the Chinese-Changchun Railway for military purposes.

Current State of Soviet Influence

Although the extent of Soviet "rights" in Manchuria has been restricted and although the Chinese Communists have apparently prevented the Soviet representatives in Manchuria from abusing their "privileges," the USSR still exercises a considerable degree of influence in the area. Soviet influence seems to be most acutely felt in Peiping's planning for the economic development of Manchuria, the "pilot area" for Chinese industrialization. The Chinese Communists have a reasonable expectation of receiving Soviet equipment and technical assistance for a given project only when such aid is "indispensable, feasible and beyond their own resources."[1] The use of such criteria probably gives the Soviet Union a strong voice in the construction of the Manchurian industrial plant; the above-mentioned September 1953 Sino-Soviet agreement, for example, stipulated 141 "enterprises" throughout China which were to be newly built, reconstructed, or expanded with Soviet equipment and technical assistance between then and 1957. The designs, techniques, and procedures employed by the Chinese in the model factories, mines, railways, and state trading companies in Manchuria bear the heavy impress of Soviet practice; this is because many Soviet experts have been

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[1] Taken from an article appearing in *Pravda* and written by Chien Chun-jui, general secretary of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association. Text broadcast by Moscow radio on November 15, 1953.

retained in their jobs despite the Chinese take-over of former Soviet and half-Soviet enterprises (e.g., the Manchouli and Suifenho transfer points on the Chinese-Changchun Railway) and because a host of Soviet advisors have been giving instructions in Soviet methods to Chinese personnel in Manchuria since even before April 1950. The curricula of the higher educational institutions in Manchuria, as in the rest of China, use Soviet teaching materials extensively.

Aside from these general influences which it exerts in Manchuria, the USSR enjoys certain military "privileges" in the area. The Chinese Communists have granted an estimated 60,000 Soviet troops the unique "privilege" of garrisoning the Port Arthur area to assist in its defense, and they consider the presence of these Soviet troops to be "of prime significance in checking and countering any aggressive schemes of imperialism." (Chou En-lai, February 22, 1953.) Soviet naval units also use the Port Arthur base. Other Soviet military personnel in Manchuria are reported to be training Chinese Communist ground and armored forces and paratroops. A total Soviet air force complement, estimated at between 5,700 and 5,800 men, is stationed at various points in Manchuria, (a) assisting in the establishment and operation of airfields and of north Korean as well as Chinese Communist air units of all types; and (b) operating Soviet combat aircraft, believed to number about 370 planes. (By comparison, there are thought to be between 12,600 and 12,700 Chinese Communist air force personnel flying and servicing about 485 Soviet-made planes in Manchuria; an additional 5,700 north Korean officers and men, flying and servicing some 240 Soviet-made planes, appear to be based at Manchurian airfields from time to time.)

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The Soviet government also maintains in Manchuria an important structure of official agencies and enterprises, and is the only foreign government to do so. The Sino-Soviet Civil Aviation Company, mentioned above, does not even have competition from the Chinese Civil Aviation Company on its Manchuria route; it uses Soviet planes and aviation gas exclusively and is staffed almost entirely with Soviet pilots. The Soviet government owns most of the fleet of boats operating on Manchuria's most important inland waterway, the Sungari River. The Sino-Soviet Shipbuilding Company, set up in 1951, administers the dockyards at Dairen, the largest in all of China, and is probably dominated by the more experienced Soviet personnel working for it. In addition, several Soviet state agencies maintain branches in Manchurian cities: SovEksportFilm (handling Soviet movies); Torgpredstvo (handling foreign trade matters); Eksportkhleb (dealing in grains).

Although the existence of many exceptional Soviet "privileges" in Manchuria is significant, it is even more significant that the nature and scope of these "privileges" have been altered at the apparent instance of the Chinese Communist regime.